



BONHOMME RICHARD'S ALMANAC

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"I have not yet begun to fight!"



JUSTICES OVERTURN 2 DEATH SENTENCES

By Linda Greenhouse

The Supreme Court set aside the death sentences of two convicted murderers in Virginia, indicating that despite sharp restrictions imposed on federal courts by a 1996 law, federal judges still have a significant role to play in reviewing the quality of justice administered by the states.

One decision unanimously granted a new hearing on allegations of juror bias and prosecutorial misconduct to an inmate who was 50 minutes away from execution when the Supreme Court intervened in October to grant a stay and accept his case for review.

In the second decision, the court grappled with the ambiguously worded core provisions of the 1996 law, the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. By a 5 to 4 vote, the court accepted the view of the law's supporters that federal judges must defer even to a state court decision they regard as incorrect, as long as the decision was not "unreasonable." But at the same time, the court was unanimous in rejecting a definition of "unreasonable" that as a practical matter would have meant that federal courts would have almost never been able to review state court rulings.

The court then voted 6 to 3 that the inmate was entitled to a new sentencing hearing because his lawyer's performance at the origi-

nal hearing fell below constitutionally minimum standards of competence. Both cases happened to be death penalty appeals, coming at a time of heightened public concern over the fairness of the way capital punishment is applied, but the court was interpreting statutory provisions that apply across the board and are not limited to the death penalty. In the past, the court has moved to streamline the appeals process for death row inmates, and the rulings Tuesday do nothing to reverse that.



The Captain greeted the Honorable Carolyn Becraft, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve, upon her arrival to the ship. She addressed manpower, retention, pay and allowances, education and retiree benefits during her visit. (Photo by PH3 Daniel Jones.)

GIRL ALMOST DIES AFTER FISH STABS HER

By Associated Press

A 17-year-old girl snorkeling for the first time was almost killed when a needle-nosed houndfish jumped out of the water and struck her in the neck.

Stephanie Mittler was recovering after emergency surgery to close her wounds and remove two pieces of the fish's serrated-bill, including one that came within a millimeter of her carotid artery.

Stephanie, her sister Jennifer and a friend were snorkeling in the waters off the Florida Keys. Stephanie was standing in chest-high water when the fish jumped from the ocean and struck her in the neck.

"Blood was just gushing from my neck," she said from her hospital bed, her voice weak and raspy. "It was pretty scary."

Jennifer and the friend surfaced and found Stephanie bleeding profusely. Thinking she had been attacked by a shark, the girls pushed Stephanie onto their

pontoon boat and hurried her to shore.

She was then rushed to the hospital. Houndfish, which are related to needlefish, average between three and six pounds and are feared by fishermen because they can leap from the water and inflict stab wounds when startled.

Laura Mittler, Stephanie's mother, said it is ironic her daughter was injured by a fish. "She hates seafood and she hates fish," Mittler said. "I told her the fish gods have gotten back at her for hating them so much."

STOCK MARKET

DOW:	10,674.96	DOWN 92.46
NASDAQ:	3,706.41	DOWN 87.16
S&P 500:	1,427.47	DOWN 14.14
NYSE:	633.27	DOWN 1.54

BONHOMME RICHARD'S ALMANAC

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FRIDAY'S STE TV SCHEDULE

CHANNEL 2

1030 SABRINA

1100 WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

1630 WWF SUPERSTARS

1730 JEOPARDY

1800 STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

1900 LAW & ORDER

2000 THIN RED LINE

2300 NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

CHANNEL 6

1030 KING OF THE HILL

1100 BUDDY

1630 LIAR, LIAR

1800 SHADOW OF OBSESSION

2000 ARMY OF DARKNESS

2200 CASABLANCA

TV SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE
DUE TO OPERATIONAL COMMITMENTS

N ATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL NEWS

REPUBLICANS OPEN UP N.Y. BALLOT

By Richard Perez-Pena

The New York state Senate approved a plan on Tuesday that would knock down notorious barriers to putting candidates on the Republican presidential primary ballot, and would make the primary a winner-take-all contest.

The Republican majority leader, Sen. Joseph Bruno, waived some minor qualms he had, creating a united front among the party's leaders for the bill, which was proposed by Gov. George Pataki. Last month, Bruno called the existing primary system "absolute nonsense."

Traditionally, the parties do not interfere in each other's primary rules, so that the Democrats who control the Assembly would simply pass whatever system the Republicans had agreed on. By that standard, Bruno's consent was the only obstacle to the bill.

Some experts in election law contend that the bill could run afoul of the Voting Rights Act. Awarding all the delegates to the top vote-getter would dilute the power of minority voters. Pataki administration officials pointed out that California had under-gone scrutiny for similar concerns and the courts had upheld its primary.

If the bill becomes law, major candidates automatically appear on the ballot. The governor and other top Republicans took a political drubbing this year over their efforts to keep Sen. John McCain off the ballot in New York's primary, as they tried to orchestrate an easy victory for their favored candidate, Gov. George W. Bush.

U.S. RESOLUTION FAILS IN U.N. VOTE

By Jane Perlez

In an embarrassing defeat for the Clinton administration, the principal U.N. body on human rights voted in Geneva this week not to act on a U.S. resolution criticizing China's human rights record.

The vote came after the State Department released one of its most withering annual reports on human rights in China and after Secretary of State Madeleine Albright last month made an impassioned speech to the group, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The commission voted 22 to 18 to back a Chinese motion for no action on the U.S.-sponsored resolution; 12 nations abstained.

The senior Chinese official at the vote, Qiao Zonghuai, denounced the resolution as "an anti-China political farce directed by the United States alone."

AIR PHILIPPINES JET CRASHES NEAR SAMAL ISLAND, 130 FEARED DEAD

By Associated Press

An Air Philippines jetliner carrying 130 passengers and crewmembers crashed Wednesday morning in the Southern Philippines, officials said.

The Boeing 737-200, which began its flight in Manila, circled the city of Davao, 625 miles southeast of Manila, before crashing on nearby Samal Island, Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado said.

Air Philippines said that the plane was carrying 130 people — 124 passengers, including four babies, and six crewmembers. There apparently were no survivors.

SPORTS

BASEBALL SCORES:

Chi. White Sox	5	Seattle	2
Cincinnati	5	San Francisco	4
NY Yankees	5	Texas	4
Pittsburgh	5	Florida	1
Baltimore	3	Tampa Bay	2
Montreal	7	Chi. Cubs	3
Oakland	10	Cleveland	5
NY Mets	3	Milwaukee	1
Boston	10	Detroit	0
Atlanta	10	Philadelphia	1
Toronto	12	Anaheim	4
St. Louis	4	San Diego	3
Minnesota	7	Kans City	6
Arizona	8	Colorado	7
Houston	10	Los Angeles	3

NBA SCORES:

Boston	112	New York	85
Detroit	112	Chicago	91
Orlando	106	Toronto	100
Milwaukee	110	Washingt	105
San Antonio	103	LA Lakers	98
Denver	96	Portland	95
Phoenix	99	Golden St.	88
Charlotte	83	Miami	73
Cleveland	111	New Jersey	108
Indiana	111	Atlanta	92
Dallas	113	Minnesota	107
Vancouver	95	Houston	92
LA Clippers	114	Seattle	106
Utah	95	Sacramento	86

ROCKER GETS STANDING OVATION

By Associated Press

John Rocker returned to a standing ovation Tuesday night, pitching a scoreless ninth inning in his first game since rejoining the Atlanta Braves after a two-week suspension.

There was hardly a hint of protest before the game, with Rocker hoping fans would remember his fastball more than his foul mouth.

The crowd of 34,903 gave Rocker a big cheer when the reliever ran in from the bullpen. One fan held up a sign that read: "Rocker for President."

Rocker struck out the first hitter he faced, Philadelphia's Mickey Morandini. He walked the next batter and then got two flyouts.

Rocker left with the score tied at 3. When he exited after his one-inning outing, many of the fans left Turner Field, too. The Braves eventually won 4-3 in 12 innings.

NHL SCORES:

Ottawa	2	Toronto	1
Detroit	3	Los Angeles	0
San Jose	3	St. Louis	2
Washington	3	Pittsburgh	2
Phoenix	3	Colorado	2



ICE CREAM SOCIAL



First Class Petty Officers dished out scoops of ice cream, chocolate and fruit topping at Wednesday's Ice Cream Social. (Photo by JO3 Laura C. Wiggins.)